

# Outcome or process regret: Consequences of brand trust to consumer purchase regret

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*Abstract:* - When consumers purchase a product, there are certain expectations as regards its uses/functions. They will experience post-purchase regrets if the product is not in accordance with the initial expectations. These regrets are due to outcome purchase and process purchase. This study was carried out having two major objectives. First was to find out the influence of brand trust on consumer purchase regret. Second was to examine brand reliability and brand intentions were significant determinants of outcome and process regret. The questionnaire technique was employed for the collection of data, and this involved 305 participants. The result confirmed that brand trust was a significant influence on consumer regret. It also revealed brand reliability to be a major predictor of reducing consumers' outcome and process regrets. These findings indicated that a brand plays a vital role in becoming an identifiable product and protects consumers from unpleasant psychological stages.

*Keywords:* - outcome regret, process regret, brand reliability, brand intention, post purchase, consumer regret

## 1. Introduction

Consumers come with diverse interests and needs. Along with the emergence of these needs, there is an urge for the consumers to attain them. Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, and Best (2007) stated that consumers will search for, and select a product according to their behaviours. After purchasing, consumers will then evaluate the product they have purchased, whether the product, to know how well it meets their need. Consumers have a tendency to judge products based on their ability to produce the desired outcomes. When a consumer buys a product, there is a certain expectation on its use/function. If the product is purchased for a specific purpose, but

turns out it cannot fulfil this purpose, then the consumer's perception about the product's usefulness/function will change from the time of purchase to the time after use and will definitely result in regret (Lee & Cotte, 2009)

According to Bui, Krishen, and Bates, (2011) Post purchase regret positively correlates with brand switching intentions, and on the other hand has a negative correlation with satisfaction levels. Thus, the role of regret has crucial implications for marketers who are interested in developing brand loyalty, and also for managers looking to repair relationships with consumers who have had a negative experience with their brand. Previously unaware brand consumers definitely have an impact

on were previously unaware of, do indeed Influence consumer regret (Lin, 2006). The brand of a product is expected by many to be a description of the product's quality. When it is constantly appraised to be good for consumers and meets consumer expectations, there is a development of brand trust. This is the customer's confidence in a brand with risks faced due to expectations of the brand and will result in positive results. Products of well-known brands will be of good quality. Consumers who have previously used a product of a particular brand to establish a level of trust in the brand can easily assume that subsequent products of the brand will not disappoint or lead to post-purchase regret.

## 2. Literature Review

Ha (2002) explains that customers who recognise a particular brand or its reputation pay minor attention to the risk of losing time and product performance risk when making purchases from a website. Zeelenberg and Pieters (2004) show that regrets greatly influence repurchase intentions i.e. the tendency to buy back a brand or product of the same brand. Tsiros and Mittal (2000) also indicated that if the performance of the rejected alternative product performance is better than that which was chosen alternative product, consumers tend to reject alternative products that are rejected in the next purchase opportunity that should be better. Customers make changes in order to live with current losses and prevent future losses by dissolving any relationship with the company (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004).

There are two components of post purchase regret, namely: outcome regret and process regret (Lee & Cotte, 2009). Outcome regret occurs when consumers feel some sort of remorse for choosing a product over others. Alternatives chosen by individuals are considered to be less favorable than others. Individuals feel remorse if the outcomes of other alternatives appear to be better than those of their choices (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). In addition, regrets arise due to the individual's perception of the underutilized product after making a purchase. Individuals have the tendency of judging a product based on its ability to satisfy their needs. Process regret occurs when an individual feels remorse for insufficient consideration and doubts about the process which led them into making the purchase. They will feel regret if they believe they have failed to abide by their originally planned decision process. Consumers will regret if they feel that they lack essential information for making a good decision. In addition to insufficient information, excess information also causes a

consumer to feel remorse. They will believe they have spent too much time and energy in the buying process. When someone takes too much into consideration during the decision process, they end up regretting to have received unnecessary information that is not needed (Lee & Cotte, 2009). According to Lin (2006) an unrecognised brand have an impact on consumer regret, especially when an unknown brand with good quality is added to two existing choices. At the post-purchase evaluation stage, this makes other brands that are better brands a promising choice, which aggravates consumer regret (comparison up). Consumers often make purchase decisions while unaware about their true valuations for a product. Such decisions have emotional consequences once uncertainties are resolved, and consumers learn in hindsight that they have made, in hindsight, the wrong choice (Zulkarnain, Novliadi, Zahreni & Iskandar, 2018).

Simonson (1992) explained that consumers feel that if the choice of a brand turns out to be wrong, this can influence the preference between well-known brands with high prices and lower and well-known brands with low prices. Particularly, respondents in regretful states were significantly more likely to choose a more well-known brand. This corresponded with the responses of most of the subjects in this study, which spoke out that they would be angrier with themselves if they chose a cheaper brand to later find that it was of an inferior quality to the more expensive one. Ikhdar (2006) revealed that the brand has its influence on consumer regret. To ensure that consumers do not regret their purchase decision, the goods provider company should maintain brand strength and quality. In the minds of consumers, a strong brand is an inherent one. So whenever they need a product, they will choose the brand of product they are familiar with.

Brands have become a major criterion for purchasing a product (Solomon, 2004). The brand chosen brand will either result in satisfaction or regret. A brand is not chosen (purchased) by consumers for its inability to satisfy their needs, but rather because of the confidence of consumers that the brand cannot satisfy it, otherwise the brand is perceived to be capable of providing some level of satisfaction. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004).

According to Lau & Lee (1999), the brand of a product is considered enough description for the quality of its product. A product quality that is constantly appraised to be good for consumers and capable of meeting consumer expectations will steadily develop a brand trust, which is the customer's desire to rely on a brand notwithstanding

risks faced, because expectations of the brand will yield positive results. Products originating from well-known brands, are deemed to be of good quality. Also, consumers who have used and are satisfied with a product of a specific brand will develop trust in the brand, leading to the assumption that any product from the brand will neither disappoint nor cause any form of regret.

Brands have become a major criterion for purchasing a product. In the minds of consumers, a strong brand is an inherent one. So whenever they need a product, they will choose the brand of product they are familiar with. Customers who recognise a particular brand or its reputation pay minor attention to the risk of losing time and risk of product performance when making purchases. Consumers have a belief that the brand they have selected is capable of providing the required satisfaction. This is because the brand of a product is considered enough description for the quality of its product. A product quality that is constantly appraised to be good for consumers and capable of meeting consumer expectations of consumers will steadily develop a brand trust.

Ballester, Aleman, and Gullien (2003) explained that brand trust reflects two things, namely: brand reliability and brand intensions. Brand reliability is the consumer's belief that a product is capable of meeting needs and providing satisfaction. The ability of brands to fulfill their promised value will make consumers put a sense of confidence in getting what they need. On the other hand, Brand Intension is the consumer's belief that a brand is capable of prioritising the interests of customers when problems in product consumption arise unexpectedly.

Consumers who have used and are satisfied with a product of a specific brand will develop trust in the brand, leading to the assumption that any product from the brand will neither disappoint nor cause any form of regret. A study also revealed that even if the performance of an alternative product from an unselected brand is better than that of the selected brand, consumers will continue to buy products of the selected brand. Regret also has an impact on repurchase intention, that is, consumers tend to buy back the brand or product from the same supplier who has previously been a cause of regret after buying a product.

This study aims to examine the impact of brand trust on post-purchase regret. Several studies have explained that brand trust is related to both brand reliability and brand intensions. The model in this

study is to investigate the impact of brand reliability and Brand Intension on outcome and process regret.

### 3. Methodology

This study was descriptive research method using cross-sectional and involved 305 respondents. Gender related, most of the participants (224 participants or 73.4%) were females. In terms of age, roughly, half of the participants (186 participants or 61%) aged 16 to 20 years.

Data was collected by consumer post purchase regret scale and brand trust scale. According to Lee & Cotte (2009), post purchase regret scale is made up of two dimensions which are outcome regret and process regret. The questionnaire items were represented by a 5-point Likert-scale. The response options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Factor analysis of outcome regret indicated that the total variance explained was one component and eigenvalue explained 61.50%. The loading factor value ranges from 0.504 to 0.847. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient of reliability of outcome regret is 0.819. Meanwhile, as regards the factor analysis of outcome regret, the total variance explained was one component and eigenvalue explained 60.42%. The loading factor value ranges from 0.530 to 0.808. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient of reliability of process regret is 0.824.

Ballester, Aleman, and Gullien (2003) opined that brand trust consists of two aspects, which are brand reliability and brand intensions. The questionnaire items were represented by a 5-point Likert-scale. The response options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). As regards the factor analysis of brand reliability, the total variance explained was one component and eigenvalue explained 51.29%. The loading factor value ranges from 0.668 to 0.736. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient of reliability of brand reliability is 0.841. In analysing of brand intensions, total variance explained was one component and eigenvalue explained 51.29%. The loading factor value ranges from 0.685 to 0.758. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient of reliability of brand intensions is 0.829.

#### 3.1 Result

The result of Pearson correlation analysis established that brand trust is considerably correlates with post purchase regret. Pearson correlation analysis indicated that brand reliability and brand intentions significantly correlate with post purchase regret, outcome regret and process regret. The data is illustrated in table 1.

**Table 1.**  
Summary of correlations among variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Post purchase regret	23.406	2.858	1					
2. Brand trust	45.150	10.380	-.272**	1				
3. Outcome regret	11.416	1.618	.792**	-.212**	1			
4. Process regret	11.990	1.861	.847**	-.233**	.347**	1		
5. Brand reliability	22.619	5.390	-.294**	.961**	-.240**	-.242**	1	
6. Brand intensions	22.531	5.406	-.229**	.961**	-.168**	-.206**	.849**	1

Based on the regression analysis in step 2, brand reliability has become a key determinant of post purchase regret. For outcome regret and process regret, it was found that brand reliability also

became a key determinant for all variables. It can thereby be concluded that brand reliability is the strongest predictor of post purchase regret. Results presented in table 2.

**Table 2.**  
Results for stepwise regression analysis

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	F
Post purchase regret step 1						
Constant	26.135	.685				
Brand intensions	-.121	.030	-.229**	.052	.052	16.771
Step 2						
Constant	26.804	.701		.088	.035	11.683
Brand intensions	.038	.055	.072			
Brand Reliability	-.188	.055	-.355**			
Outcome regret Step 1						
Constant	12.548	.393		.028	.028	8.785
Brand intensions	-.050	.017	-.168**			
Step 2						
Constant	12.922	.402		.062	.034	11.056
Brand intensions	.039	.032	.129			
Brand Reliability	-.105	.032	-.350**			
Process regret Step 1						
Constant	13.586	.448		.042	.042	13.396
Brand intensions	-.071	.019				
Step 2						
Constant	13.882	.464		.059	.016	9.395
Brand intensions	-.001	.036	-.001			
Brand Reliability	-.083	.036	-.241**			

#### 4. Discussion

The result derived from the data analysis supports the research hypothesis that brand trust negatively and significantly influenced toward post-purchase regret. An increasing brand trust will be followed by a decrease in consumer's post purchase regret. Brand trust plays a major role in influencing purchasing decisions. Trust in sellers, products, and services are highly dependent on brand trust.

The result of the study revealed brand reliability to be a major determinant of outcome and process regret. Brand reliability is one of the requirements for a brand, to be successful in the market. Brand reliability is an important aspect to be considered by customers in deciding the purchase of a product. Even though the prices of substitute brands may be lower, but are not reliable, customers will still not consider them.

Reliable and familiar brands will offer customers comfort, intimacy and trust. Customers will pay attention to new products of brands well-known to have better quality than the unfamiliar ones. When a customer has a brand trust, a relationship emerges between regret with the choice between the brand and price. Consumers have the tendency to choose expensive products of brands that are already known to them in order to avoid feelings of regret (M'Barek and Gharbi, 2011).

Chu, Song, & Choi (2013) established that when consumers choose their most liked brands they like most, they attribute more positive remarks to the brand and more negative ones to themselves, compared to consumers who choose brands that are less preferred brands. Those who have chosen their most preferred brands tend to see their prior trust in brands will be strengthened after they have experienced positive results and linked them with the brand. When the most preferred brands do not perform well, the customer will learn to tolerate them. On the other hand, when consumers go for brands that are less preferred, they associate negative remarks with the brands and not positive ones. It depicts the relatively unfavourable position of the less preferred brands. Buyers experience a higher regret from products of less preferred brands experience more regret than those of much more preferred brands. This could be attributable to a long-standing attachment to a brand or a desire to keep choosing even after the regret.

Shiue & Lie (2013) found that brand involvement develops good relationships with consumers even at times of dissatisfaction occurs. Customers and brand trust play a vital role in evaluating consumer attitudes after the service received good or service has failed to perform to expectation. The quality of

customer relationships with a trusted brand gives a halo effect that supports the effect of the delay on repurchase intentions. This does not mean that businesses are free to disappoint customers, but they must make efforts to establish a strong brand involvement in the customer's mind of customers, which increases their chances of retaining and winning back their customers.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study has provided insights on consumer regret experience regarding to the purchase of products via the internet. They regret as a result of the outcome (feel remorse for choosing a product instead of the alternatives) or process (feels remorse for inadequate consideration). Unknown brands influence consumer regret. Brand trust is capable of protecting the brand from negatively charged emotions attributable to unfavourable brand comparisons. It protects consumers from unpleasant psychological stages caused by poor purchasing choices. This finding implies that brands can facilitate regulation of regret. Building strong relationships with brands is one of the strategies for minimising effective regret, and consumers will feel better about the "bad" purchasing decisions if they involve brand choice. Brand Trust can be realised if a product has met the expectations and needs of consumers, making them satisfied with the product. For consumers who feel comfortable and believe in a product, it will not be easy to leave or replace the product with those from other brands. Therefore, brands also play a crucial role in becoming identified with the product. A brand must be able to give trust to consumers for it to be truly perceived as trustworthy. The consequences of regret are costly for companies as they lose customers.

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